

BRISTOL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING

Held: June 20, 2011, at Town Hall, 10 Court Street, Bristol, Rhode Island

Present: Chairman Oryann Lima, Members John Allen, Sara Butler, Victor Cabral, Thomas Enright, Eric Hertfelder

Also Present: Andrew Teitz, Esq., Assistant Town Solicitor

Absent: Reggie McCarthy, Timothy Pray, Alternate

Chairman Lima brought the meeting to order at 7:05PM.

AGENDA: Discussion of Historic District Advisory Committee Report

Chairman Lima began the discussion by having the members comment on the recommendations beginning on Page 8. Members discussed several areas where action has already been taken or has been discussed for the near future.

1a. Increase awareness and use ... “At the present time, information is available in the HDC office which is offered to the public. Also, there are many links on the website leading to more extensive and detailed publications (which lead to even more publications).

A suggestion for consideration was a post card mailing to all property owners with the HDC web address and a short blurb about help available to homeowners. Under consideration is publication of the existence of the Preservation Library at the Rogers Free Library.

1b. With the exception of new Alternate Member, Tim Pray, all of the Commissioners and the Staff Assistant have attended the training session “Preserving Your Community’s Historic Character: Best Practices for Historic District Commissions” sponsored by Grow Smart Rhode Island. Several members and the Staff Assistant attended the RI Statewide Historic Preservation Conference this year as they have in past years.

1c. Chairman Lima reported that Diane Williamson will coordinate and assist in producing a HDC brochure. A data base of property owners with addresses was created late last fall and will be maintained for future mailings.

1d. Two workshops were presented to the public last winter and will be scheduled in the future (under consideration is a workshop on repairing windows). All workshops in the future will be video taped and made available on the website.

Eric Hertfelder stated that windows, substitute materials and solar panels should be the first areas to be explored. Arnold Robinson volunteered himself and his students along with Eric and John Allen to help prepare programs on these subjects. Andy Teitz noted that before a window workshop, the Commission needs an internal discussion to come to a consensus regarding window treatment. Sara Butler agreed that this was very important. A meeting will be held in September concentrating on the discussion of windows.

1.e There have been some changes made to the website in its current location. The complete “Guideline for Rehabilitation, Additions and New Construction” is now available and posted on the site. Changing the location of the link is up to the Town Administrator and it is my understanding that she has scheduled a meeting to review the entire website.

2. With regarding to making the review/approval process clearer and easier.

2a. The Commission agreed that the guidelines need updating and will begin working on this in the very near future. The Guidelines and the Secretary of Interior Standards are on the website. The Commission already considers the

- Historic or architectural value of the property..
- Relation of the exterior architectural features to the rest of the structure
- Compatibility of arrangement, design, texture and materials

The Guidelines will be referenced in the new brochure.

Tom Enright noted that every member of the advisory committee felt very strongly that “different properties should be looked at differently.” Eric Hertfelder noted that the Sec’y Interior’s Standards can apply to “any property” (inferring of any age.) He stated that what is important about a property should be noted, then to apply standards.

2b. The number rating is no longer in use, buildings are now considered as “contributing” or “non-contributing.” If funds and/or qualified volunteers become available, the survey will be updated.

2c. Until a new survey is completed, information for an “architectural value” category could be left to discussion between applicant and commission member and/or staff assistant.

A note can be added mentioning availability of a “concept review.” If a notification form is included in the process, a new form will be created.

2d. All agendas, minutes and folders are available for inspection as per the Secretary of State’s Open Meeting and Records laws.

2e. Commission members will include a more detailed explanation/justification regarding an application ruling. At the present time a Letter of Approval is mailed following a ruling the specific Sec’y. Interior Standard is spelled out for the property owner.

2f. Chm. Lima suggested holding discussion on suggested (A) exemptions from review and (B) three levels of review at a separate meeting. Member Enright stated he felt the Town Council would adopt both A and B.

Discussion was held regarding the suggested categories. Specifics to follow see Attachment (B).

2g. A hand-out will be created with definitions of terms along with visual examples. This pamphlet will also be included on the website.

2h. Staff Assistant hours have been increased by four during the most active time of the year.

3. With regard to providing more assistance and promoting collaboration

3a. The "Concept Review" will be noted in brochure and website. Also, the Staff Assistant will suggest a "concept review" to homeowners who are unsure of the appropriateness of their designs and/or who are looking for HDC advice as has been done in the past.

3b. Seating is at the platform because of the recording equipment.

3c. A list of advisors will be compiled of volunteers to aid with planning and applications.

ATTACHMENT (B)

Review Process

A. Exemptions from review, no notification required

Commissioners agreed that the following could be exempt:

1. Flags
2. Buzzers, ...
3. Garden Furnishings...
4. Painting (using **conventional paint**)
5. Landscaping...
6. Portable window air conditioners
7. Signs for handicapped access
9. ?Temporary signs (A. Teitz to check zoning)
10. Window boxes
11. Decorating
12. Storm Windows (if metal or wood)
15. Chimney caps
16. Satellite dishes and antennas (as exempt per zoning)
 Weathervanes (separate #)
17. Repair or replacement of gutters and downspouts...
19. Changes to flat roofs...
20. Fabric awnings, except those than function as signs
21. Resealing existing driveways

Commissioners felt the following should be included in Section B2 (review by staff)

8. Ordinary maintenance and repair or replacements...
13. Storm doors...
14. Fences not between...
18. Lighting and light fixtures...

B1 Notification, no review normally required:

Commission members were not in agreement with section B1 regarding Notification with no review normally required. It was thought that individual property owner's interpretation of the process might vary greatly. It was thought that the Sign-off process encompassed almost all of the areas listed and was adequate for both ease to property owner and control of building preservation.

Item B1-3 re-pointing brick foundations and chimneys could be added to the Exempt category.

Item B1-4 – State preservationists were able two years ago to ban gas meters from the front or street view of historic properties, air conditioner compressors are generally larger than gas meters and are an eyesore to buildings and streetscapes.

B2 Review by Staff:

Members would add item

f. temporary removal of shutters, trim... to the Exempt category

B2-2 Other projects unlikely to affect...

Members would add the following to full commission review.

a. Aluminum and plastic gutters...

b. Solar panels

Chairman Lima stated that the changes will take time to implement and hoped the Town Council would take this into account. It would not be District's best interest to implement sweeping review changes without a thorough review of the consequences exemptions and simple notifications could create.

Tom Enright suggested that some of the review changes could be tried on a trial basis.

It was decided that the next step would be to report the results of this discussion to the Town Council as requested at the July 27th meeting. Chairman Lima, Andy Teitz and Staff Assistant Church will create this report.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was unanimously passed at 9:50PM

SC

Date Approved: August 4, 2011